

AN ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES OF MAHA OYA, A MOUNTAIN STREAM OF SRI LANKA

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Odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) found in the vicinity of the lower reaches of Maha Oya, a small mountain stream flowing through the premises of Peradeniya University Campus, were studied. Sampling was carried out from May to September 2000, at two weeks intervals. Adult odonates were caught with an insect net and identified. The aquatic nymphs inhabiting two different habitats of the stream (sandy and rocky) were collected and identified using available keys. The percentage abundance of different species of nymphs was studied at four selected stations along the stream.

Twelve species of odonates belonging to 8 families and 11 genera were identified. Of these, 5 species are endemic to Sri Lanka. Nymphs of the odonates are found in a great variety of habitats. The anisopteran (dragonflies) nymphs are usually found in habitats that are composed of sandy substrata, whereas the zygopteran (damselflies) nymphs are found in rocky substrata. The nymphs of *Paragomphus henryi* were found to be the most common species in the sandy substratum of Maha Oya.